

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-06 OPIC-03 SAM-01 CIAE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SCCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05

CCO-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02 OC-05

OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-15

SY-05 EB-07 SIL-01 LAB-04 EURE-00 SCS-03 ACDA-05 /106 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5091

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 7001

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO, MILI

SUBJ: POWER STRUGGLE: ROUND THREE TO ANTI-COMMUNISTS

REF: FBIS LONDON LD250025Y DTG 250025Z NOV 75

SUMMARY: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL REAFFIRMED ITS NOMINATION OF
CPT VASCO LOURENCO AS LISBON MILITARY REGION COMMANDER TO REPLACE
GEN. OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO. REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ALSO CON-
DEMNNED PARTISAN EFFORTS TO INTERFERE IN MILITARY DECISIONS.

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COUNCIL DECISION IS CLEAR VICTORY FOR NON-COMMUNISTS, BUT

COMMUNISTS AND LEFTISTS IN AND OUT OF THE MILITARY CAN BE EXPECTED TO MOUNT STRONG CHALLENGE IN AREAS. END SUMMARY.

1. LOURENCO CONFIRMED: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) CONFIRMED ITS DECISION OF NOV 21 TO NAME CPT VASCO LOURENCO AS NEW LISBON REGION MILITARY (RML) COMMANDER IN MEETING WHICH CONCLUDED AT 4:45AM, NOV 25. RC ALSO CONDEMNED "INADMISSIBLE INTERFERENCES OF PARTISAN POLITICAL FORCES, UNIONS AND ISOLATED CIVILIAN ENTITIES IN MILITARY DECISIONS." RC REPUDIATED SUCH INTERFERENCE AND DECIDED NOT TO BE PRESSURED IN ANY WAY BY SUCH INTERFERENCE. RC CONDEMNED THREATS OF CIVIL WAR, AND "VOWED TO OPPOSE BY ALL MEANS, INCLUDING MILITARY ACTION, THOSE WHO UNLEASH ARMED REBELLION OR CIVIL WAR."

2. MILITARY REMAINS IN LOW-LEVEL STATE OF ALERT CALLED BY COPCON EVENING OF NOV. 24.

3. COMMANDOS IN ACTION: FROM 2:00 AM TO 4:00 AM NOV 25, FOUR ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS FROM COMMANDO REGIMENT TOOK UP BLOCKING POSITIONS AT ENTRANCE TO HEADQUARTERS OF RADICAL LISBON MILITARY POLICE REGIMENT. MOVE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RELATED TO QUESTION OF DISTRIBUTION OF ARMS AND EQUIPMENT RECENTLY ARRIVED FROM ANGOLA. COMMANDO OPERATION WAS APPARENTLY CARRIED OUT TO PREVENT FURTHER INTERCEPTIONS AND ENSURE THAT EQUIPMENT REACHED "LOYAL" HANDS.

4. FARMERS ERECT BARRICADES: LANDOWNERS IN RIO MAIOR, 40 MILES FROM LISBON, ERECTED BARRICADES FOR SEVERAL HOURS EARLY NOV 25 ON MAIN ROAD CONNECTING LISBON AND OPORTO, GENERATING TREMENDOUS BACK-UPS IN TRAFFIC ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF LISBON (REFTEL). ACTION FOLLOWED NOV 24 NATIONAL MEETING OF FARMERS IN RIO MAIOR WHERE FARMERS DISCUSSED NEED TO REDEFINE CONCEPT OF SMALL FARMER, CONDEMNED LAW GOVERNING EXPROPRIATION OF PROPERTY, AND CRITICIZED LEFTIST MILITARY FIGURES SUCH AS COPCON COMMANDER OTELO CARVALHO. FARMERS REFUSED TO DISMANTLE BARRICADES UNTIL REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MET WITH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN LISBON. THEY ALSO THREATENED TO CUT OFF WATER AND ELECTRICITY TO LISBON. MEETING TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 2:00 AND 2:30 AM, FOLLOWING WHICH DELEGATION ANNOUNCED RC HAD AGREED TO STUDY THEIR COMPLAINTS. BARRICADES CAME DOWN AROUND 4:00 AM.

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5. LIMITED SUPPORT GIVEN GENERAL STRIKE CALL: AN EFFORT BY THE PCP-SUPPORTED INTERSINDICAL AND THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS OF THE INDUSTRIAL BELT OF LISBON TO PROMOTE A NATION-WIDE TWO HOUR WORK STOPPAGE NOVEMBER 24 MET WITH LIMITED SUPPORT. A NUMBER OF FACTORIES IN THE LISBON INDUSTRIAL AREA DID STOP PRODUCTION WHILE THE WORKERS DEBATED THE POLITICAL SITUATION. HOWEVER, FOR THE MOST PART THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE COUNTRY WAS UNAFFECTED AND THE STRIKE CALL WAS IGNORED IN THE IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL REGION

SURROUNDING OPORTO.

6. COMMENT: ROUND ONE IN THE POWER STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF THE LISBON MILITARY REGION WENT TO THE NON-COMMUNISTS WHEN THE RC NAMED LOURENCO TO RML. ROUND TWO WENT TO THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR ALLIES WHEN OTELO REVERSED HIMSELF AND CAME OUT AGAINST LOURENCO. ROUND THREE GOES TO THE NON-COMMUNISTS WITH SOARES AND ANTUNES RECEIVING SMALL SLAP FOR THEIR STATEMENTS ABOUT IMMINENT CIVIL WAR.

7. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT GROUP OF NINE HAS ALMOST TWO TO ONE MAJORITY IN THE RC AND CAN EASILY WIN ANY VOTE. ENFORCING THE RC DECISION IS ANOTHER MATTER. THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR ALLIES WILL TRY HARD FOR A COMEBACK. THEY WILL ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE PRESIDENT AND AZEVEDO INTO RESTRUCTURING CABINET IN SUCH A WAY AS TO "COMPENSATE" THEM FOR TODAY'S LOSS. THE PRESIDENT IS LIKELY TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR MOVE BUT AZEVEDO AND SOCIALISTS WILL STRONGLY RESIST IT.

8. SHOW OF FORCE BY COMMANDOS AT MILITARY POLICE REGIMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM LANDOWNERS AROUND LISBON, WHETHER COORDINATED OR NOT, SERVE AS DRAMATIC MUSCLE-FLEXING BY NON-COMMUNISTS. AS YET LISBON MILITARY UNITS UNDER RADICAL LEADERSHIP HAVE NOT RESPONDED TO LATEST RC MOVE BUT THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO DO SO SOON--ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF LOURENCO'S WEEKEND STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD DISMISS SOME OF THEIR COMMANDERS. OUTCOME OF THE NEXT CONFRONTATION WILL DEPEND ON PCP'S ABILITY TO CONVINCE MAJOR ACTORS OF ITS FORCE AND INDISPENSABILITY. THIS COULD BE THROUGH DEMONSTRATIONS OR WORK STOPPAGES. YESTERDAY'S WORK STOPPAGE WAS A FLOP, BUT HAD ONLY HALF-HEARTED COMMUNIST SUPPORT. PCP MAY GO ALL OUT ON NEXT EVENT. THERE WILL BE A CAREFUL WEIGHING BY ALL SIDES IN MILITARY--ESPECIALLY IN RML--OF RELATIVE STRENGTH AND DISCIPLINE OF CONTENDING UNITS. DEPENDING ON THE POSITION
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TAKEN BY THE MARINES, THE MODERATES WITH A STRONG, WELL-DISCIPLINED COMMANDO UNIT, PLUS THE 500 PARATROOPERS RETURNED FROM ANGOLA, MAY BE ABLE TO FACE DOWN THE REBELLIOUS, UNDISCIPLINED (AND PROBABLY MILITARILY INEFFICIENT) RADICAL UNITS. NEVERTHELESS, IN VIEW OF SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED DISINTEGRATION OF WHAT WAS THOUGHT TO BE ONE OF THE MOST LOYAL, CONSERVATIVE AND DISCIPLINED UNITS IN THE COUNTRY--THE PARATROOPERS AT TANCOS--, NOBODY CAN BET HEAVILY ON A MODERATE VICTORY.
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